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THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

ELEVENTH ASSEMBLY

RR25BY25 REPORT 2026

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ACT Government

RR25BY25 REPORT

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 3

RECIDIVISM INDICATORS 4

Primary recidivism indicator 5

ACT 2025-26 recidivism results – change from previous year 5

National comparison of recidivism indicators – 2024-25 6

ACT Corrective Services data dashboards 10

BUILDING THE EVIDENCE BASE 11

Outcome measures project 12

Qualitative desistance project 13

Data capacity project 13

International evidence-based programs 14

INTEGRATING PLANNING, IMPROVING DATA AND LOOKING FORWARD 14

Integrated planning 14

Data and Reporting 15

JUSTICE REINVESTMENT: LISTENING, LEARNING AND LOOKING FORWARD .. 16

CONCLUSION 17

APPENDIX A – ACTCS DATA TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS 18

APPENDIX B - POPULATION LEVEL NATIONAL DATA SOURCES 19

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2020 the ACT Government committed to reducing recidivism in the ACT by 25% by 2025 through *RR25by25 2020-2023.* The strategy sought to reduce reoffending through justice reinvestment, evidence-based policy development, improved data and evaluation, and a focus on improving outcomes for priority populations, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In 2024, *RR25by25 and Beyond: A Justice Reinvestment Strategy for the ACT* provided an update on progress and set out the next phase of reform. The Government expanded its focus on building the evidence base through the 2024 Election Commitment to explore international evidence-based programs that specifically target recidivist offending.

This report provides clarity on the ACT recidivism target, national measures, ACT's progress against indicators and the outcomes of recent research and evaluation projects related to recidivism. The report fulfils the Government's commitment to provide annual public reporting to the Legislative Assembly, and notes that improved recidivism reporting may be incorporated into future Justice and Community Safety Directorate Annual Reports.

The primary RR25by25 indicator shows that 33.5% of adults released following a term of sentenced imprisonment returned to prison within two years, remaining 1.8% above the target of 31.7%.

Overall recidivism rates have improved. The ACT rates remain below national rates on several measures and community corrections outcomes continue to be particularly strong.

At the same time, rates of reoffending among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people remain disproportionately high and increased between 2024-25 and 2025-26. This reinforces the need for continued focus on Closing the Gap commitments, justice reinvestment and community-led reform.

A key achievement has been the significant expansion of the ACT's evidence base on reducing recidivism and contact with the justice system and improving justice outcomes. ACT led research and evaluation confirms that reducing recidivism is less dependent on any single program and more dependent on embedding evidence-based principles across the justice and human services systems with a focus on:

- Early intervention and diversion from the justice system.
- Stable housing, health care and financial security.
- Strong family, community and cultural connections.
- Continuity of care between custody and the community.
- Coordinated, person-centred and culturally safe services.
- Better data and evaluation capability to support evidence-based decision-making.

The next phase of reform will focus on implementation, data capability and investment priorities.

The Government will continue to strengthen the evidence base through expanding data capability, reporting and accountability. This includes enhancing the granularity of recidivism reporting, improving data related to offending and bail outcomes, increasing public access to justice data, strengthening evaluation capability, and continuing to explore options for linked justice datasets.

Future work will focus on translating the growing evidence base into coordinated policy, service design and investment decisions.

RECIDIVISM INDICATORS

The target recidivism rate of 31.7% by 2025 was calculated from the 2018–19 baseline of 42.4% of adults released following a term of sentenced imprisonment who returned to prison with a new sentence episode within two years.

When the 2025 target was established in *RR25by25 2020-2023*, it was noted that the recidivism rate for offenders released from prison in 2024-25 would not be measurable until 2026–27[1].

In 2025, the ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) conducted a comprehensive review into how adult recidivism rates are calculated. This change coincided with the transition to a new offender management system and the development of an automated data model. The automated data model enables better tracking of those who return to ACTCS and aligns with the strategic vision to improve the quality, consistency, and timeliness of recidivism data. However, this means results from 2024-25 onward are not directly comparable to previous years. Appendix A provides details of these technical data specifications.

While the final 2026-27 results against the RR25by25 target will not be directly comparable to the 2018-19 baseline, the target of 31.7% has been retained.

The ACT financial year results against the primary recidivism target are published first in the Justice and Community Safety Annual Report in October every year under *Strategic Objective 2: Safe Community*[2].

ACT recidivism data is then published in February in the *Justice sector overview* (Table CA.4) in *the Report on Government Service (RoGS)*[3], where the Productivity Commission provides further analysis of the data, including calculating rates using population data so that recidivism indicators can be compared across jurisdictions.

Ex-prisoner return to prison rates alone do not measure broader changes in criminal behaviour that can indicate a reduction in recidivism. Nationally, the Report on Government Services measures re-offending by:

- the proportion of people aged 10 years or over who were proceeded against more than once by police during the year
- the proportion of adults released from prison after serving a sentence who returned to corrective services (either prison or community corrections) within two years, with a new correctional sanction
- the proportion of adults discharged from community corrections orders who returned to corrective services (either prison or community corrections) with a new correctional sanction within two years

Table 2 below provides ACT 2025-26 recidivism data that will be published in RoGS in February 2027, with additional details where available, to provide a deeper insight into the results and an initial step towards publishing more granularity on ACT recidivism data.

The latest national comparison data is included in Tables 3-5 below for 2024-25, based on the RoGS 2026[4].

From 2026-27, increased reporting on recidivism indicators will be included in the Justice and Community Safety Annual Reports.

[1] Pg 26 RR25by25 2020-2023: access here https://www.act.gov.au/open/reducing-recidivism
[2] https://www.act.gov.au/open/justice-and-community-safety-directorate-annual-reports
[3] https://www.pc.gov.au/ongoing/report-on-government-services/
[4] https://www.pc.gov.au/ongoing/report-on-government-services/justice/

Primary recidivism indicator

Sentenced detainees who return to custody within two years

The ACT 2025-26 results for sentenced detainees who returned to prison within two years is as follows:

- In 2023-24, **203** sentenced detainees were released from the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) following a term of sentenced imprisonment
- 59 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- 21 were female
- Of the 203, **176** were released under supervision (e.g., parole or another community corrections order) and **27** were released without further conditions.
- **68** subsequently returned to custody (with a new sentenced custodial episode) in 2024–25 or 2025–26
- This means the recidivism rate is **33.5%**, which is 1.8% above the target of 31.7%

Data Table 1: 2025-26 results against the ACT target



TARGET	2025-26 RESULT	VARIANCE
31.7% of adults released following a term of sentenced imprisonment return to prison with a new sentence episode within two years	**33.5%**	**+1.8%**

ACT 2025-26 recidivism results – change from previous year

In addition to data related to the primary recidivism indicator above, the ACT results for 2025-26 in Table 2 below will be published in RoGS in February 2027. To provide additional context, the number of people that returned has been included in addition to the proportion (%).

Table 3 below provides a breakdown of the return to corrective services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the female populations.

The change from 2024-25 to 2025-26 shows that:

- Recidivism rates reduced overall, with fewer people released from prison coming back into the correctional system.
- Female recidivism rates reduced overall, however small numbers result in high changes in percentages.
- Of most concern, the rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults increased.

Data Table 2: ACTCS recidivism rates change from 2024-25 to 2025-26[5]

		2024-25	2025-26	Change from previous year
Adult populations				
Adults released following a term of sentenced imprisonment who returned to prison with a new sentence episode within two years	No.	88 out of 237	68 out of 203	-3.6%
	%	37.1%	33.5%	
Adults released following a term of sentenced imprisonment who returned to corrective services with a new correctional sanction within two years (prison sentence or community corrections order)	No.	105 out of 237	76 out of 203	-6.9%
	%	44.3%	37.4%	
Adults who successfully completed a community corrections order who returned to community corrections	No.	41 out of 502	18 out of 448	-4.2%
	%	8.2%	4.0%	
Adults who successfully completed a community corrections order who returned to ACTCS (prison sentence or community corrections order)	No.	57 out of 502	30 out of 448	-4.7%
	%	11.4%	6.7%	

Data Table 3: ACTCS recidivism rates change from 2024-25 to 2025-26, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and female populations[6]

		2024-25	2025-26	Change from previous year
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations				
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults released following a term of sentenced imprisonment who returned to prison with a new sentence episode within two years	%	45.6%	55.9%	+10.0%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults released following a term of sentenced imprisonment who returned to corrective services with a new correctional sanction within two years (prison sentence or community corrections order)	%	50.9%	55.9%	+5.1%
Female populations				
Female adults released following a term of sentenced imprisonment who returned to prison with a new sentence episode within two years	%	42.1%	23.8%	-18.3%
Female adults released following a term of sentenced imprisonment who returned to corrective services with a new correctional sanction within two years (prison sentence or community corrections order)	%	42.1%	28.6%	-13.5%

[5] Data Table 2 Notes
Individuals are counted as a 'return' when they were released from prison (on a sentenced episode) and returned in the next two financial years on a new sentenced episode.
The ACT uses Method 2 for the 'cut off date' which means that if a remandee returns to custody within two years, and is sentenced to custody by 30 June of the same financial year, then they are included as in-scope for the indicator.
Exclusion criteria are applied to the numerator and denominator. Indicators exclude those who have an episode in custody prior to an interstate transfer, extradition or who are deceased while in custody.

[6] Data Table 3 Notes
Small sample sizes limit the comparability of these data points over time due to large fluctuations in the return rate, and these findings should be interpreted with caution.
Small year-to-year fluctuations in both the numerator (former female detainees who returned) and denominator (female detainees who were released from AMC) resulted in substantial variations in the return rate.
See also Table 2 notes

National comparison of recidivism indicators – 2024-25

The measures reported on in this section are based on the national RoGs recidivism indicators, from the most recent data published in RoGS 2026 and ABS Recorded Crime – Offenders 2024-25 (which will be included in the RoGs 2027).

Proportion of people who were proceeded against more than once by police

The national data on the proportion of people who were proceeded against more than once by police suggests that in 2024-25 repeated police contact was less likely in the ACT than in most other jurisdictions.

Most people who came to police attention did so only once. Almost 8 in 10 offenders (79.1%) in the ACT were proceeded against just a single time during the year, which is the highest proportion among jurisdictions. Male and female offenders show a very similar pattern, with most police proceedings occurring once rather than having repeated interactions.

Data Table 4: Proportion of people aged 10 years or over who were proceeded against more than once by police in 2024-25[7]

		NSW(a)	Vic.	Qld	SA	Tas.	NT(b)	ACT(d)
Males								
1	%	70.5	69.2	64.3	74.9	65.4	72.4	79.2
2	%	14.7	13.7	17.4	13.1	15.5	17.3	12.5
3	%	6.2	5.9	7.6	4.8	6.7	6.3	3.8
4	%	3.1	3.4	3.9	2.6	4.5	2.1	1.8
5 or more	%	5.5	7.8	6.8	4.6	7.8	1.8	3.1
Females								
1	%	72.7	71.9	64.9	74.7	67.2	79.9	79.9
2	%	13.4	13.1	16.8	12.7	14.4	14.0	12.2
3	%	5.6	5.7	7.3	4.8	7.2	3.8	3.4
4	%	2.8	2.8	4.0	2.7	3.4	1.4	2.1
5 or more	%	5.4	6.7	7.0	5.2	7.7	0.8	2.5
Persons(e)								
1	%	71.0	69.8	64.5	74.8	65.9	74.5	79.1
2	%	14.4	13.5	17.3	13.0	15.1	16.4	12.4
3	%	6.0	5.9	7.5	4.8	7.0	5.7	3.5
4	%	3.1	3.2	3.9	2.7	4.1	1.9	1.8
5 or more	%	5.5	7.6	6.8	4.7	7.9	1.5	3.1

[7]Data Table 4 Notes:
Data for Western Australia not published.
Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data. Discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.
(a) 2024–25 data by sex in New South Wales may not be comparable to earlier years due to an increase in the proportion of unknown sex.
(b) Northern Territory data from 2023–24 onwards not comparable with earlier reference periods due to a system change.
(c) The minimum age of criminal responsibility in the Northern Territory was raised from 10 to 12 years on 1 August 2023 and reverted to 10 years on 17 October 2024. Users are advised to consider these changes when making comparisons to data across reference periods.
(d) The minimum age of criminal responsibility increased from 10 to 12 years during the 2023-24 reference period for the Australian Capital Territory. Users are advised not to compare data to earlier reference periods.
(e) Includes offenders with an unknown sex.
Source: ABS Recorded Crime - Offenders Table 16

Proportion of adults who returned to corrective services

The ACT's overall recidivism rate has decreased and remains below the national average, driven by strong community corrections outcomes.

Recidivism among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT was below the national rate, however the year-on-year increase in the ACT outlined in the 2025-26 results above means the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rates remain a key challenge for the ACT and a continued focus on meeting commitments under Closing the Gap.

Data Table 5:

Proportion of adults released from prison who returned to corrective services across Australia[8]

2024-25 Adults released from prison who returned to prison or to corrective services with a new correctional sanction within two years (a)										
	Unit	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas (b)	ACT (c)	NT	Aust
Adults released following a term of sentenced imprisonment who returned to prison with a new sentence episode within two years (d)(e)										
All people (f)	%	50.2	36.8	44.3	36.2	29.8	46.6	37.1	59.5	44.5
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	%	64.5	43.8	55.4	49.5	40.2	52.3	45.6	61.5	57.0
Non-Indigenous people	%	41.6	35.8	35.9	25.2	26.4	44.4	34.4	26.7	36.0
Adults release from prison who returned to corrective services with a new correctional sanction within two years (g)										
All people	%	62.4	45.9	53.1	45.6	36.8	55.6	44.3	61.4	53.6
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	%	76.2	51.4	64.1	62.4	48.8	59.9	50.9	63.5	65.4
Non-Indigenous people	%	54.2	45.2	44.8	31.8	33.0	54.4	42.2	26.7	45.7

[8] Data Table 5 Notes

(a) Refers to all prisoners released following a term of sentenced imprisonment including prisoners subject to correctional supervision following release, that is, offenders released on parole or other community corrections orders. Data include returns to prison resulting from the cancellation of a parole order.

(b) Tasmania's 2024-25 recidivism data is not directly comparable to previous years due to changes in measurement. Updates to how imprisonment episodes and release reasons are classified, along with fewer sentenced releases, have affected the return rate.

(c) In 2025, the ACT conducted a review in how recidivism results were derived. Data from 2024-25 are aligned with the report's counting rules for this indicator. Results are not comparable to previous financial years due to the transition to a new offender management system and development of a revised method using the automated data model.

(d) Two different methods have been used by jurisdictions to count adults released from prison who return to prison within two years. Method 1: New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and the Northern Territory include prisoners who return to prison and are sentenced within two years of release (Victoria has retrospectively applied this method to returns data from 2016-17 onward). South Australia changed its methodology in 2021-22 to also reflect Method 1. Method 2: Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory include prisoners who return to prison within two years (sentenced or on remand), provided that those who return on remand within two years of release are sentenced by the following 30 June (South Australian data for 2020-21 and earlier are based on Method 2). The second method may therefore result in slightly higher return rates than the first method.

(e) Includes released prisoners who returned to prison only, or who returned to both prison and community corrections.

(f) Includes people whose Indigenous status was unknown.

(g) Includes a prison sentence or a community corrections order.

Source: RoGS 2025, (Table CA.4).

Data Table 6:

Proportion of adults discharged from community corrections who returned to corrective services[9]

2024-25 Adults discharged from community corrections orders who returned to corrective services with a new correctional sanction within two years (a)										
	Unit	NSW (b)	Vic	Qld	WA	SA (c)	Tas (d)	ACT (e)	NT	Aust
Adults discharged from community corrections orders returning to community corrections										
All people	%	17.6	9.1	15.6	15.4	17.3	8.2	8.2	8.8	15.4
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	%	24.1	12.7	21.1	25.0	26.8	12.6	5.6	9.7	21.7
Non-Indigenous people	%	16.0	9.1	13.6	11.1	15.7	7.5	9.0	3.9	13.7
Adults discharged from community corrections orders returning to corrective services (f)										
All people	%	31.0	10.8	23.7	21.8	14.6	20.2	11.4	33.1	24.7
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	%	48.8	16.0	34.6	34.6	22.3	28.0	10.1	37.1	39.4
Non-Indigenous people	%	26.3	10.7	19.6	16.0	13.4	18.7	12.0	11.0	20.5

[9] Data Table 6 Notes:

(a) Adults discharged from community corrections orders only include those who successfully completed the community corrections order and are based on the results in Table 8A.21. Consideration should be given to the fact that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders have lower rates of successful order completions, and therefore a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders are excluded from this measure than non-Indigenous offenders.

(b) Data for this indicator for 2021-22 was updated following identification of a processing error.

(c) The South Australian Department of Correctional Services changed the methodology for calculating the rate of returns to corrective services. The rate of returns to corrective services in 2021-22 reflects this change.

(d) The methodology to calculate the number of ex-offenders who returned to community corrections/corrective services with a new sanction within two years was changed in 2021-22 to improve identification of concurrent episodes.
Tasmania's 2024-25 community corrections recidivism data is not directly comparable to previous years due to refinements in measurement. These include improved classification of order types and enhanced identification of overlapping or consecutive episodes, resulting in a lower return rate.

(e) In 2025, the ACT conducted a review in how recidivism results were derived. Data from 2024-25 are aligned with the report's counting rules for this indicator. Results are not comparable to previous financial years due to the transition to a new offender management system and development of a revised method using the automated data model.

(f) Includes a prison sentence or a community corrections order.

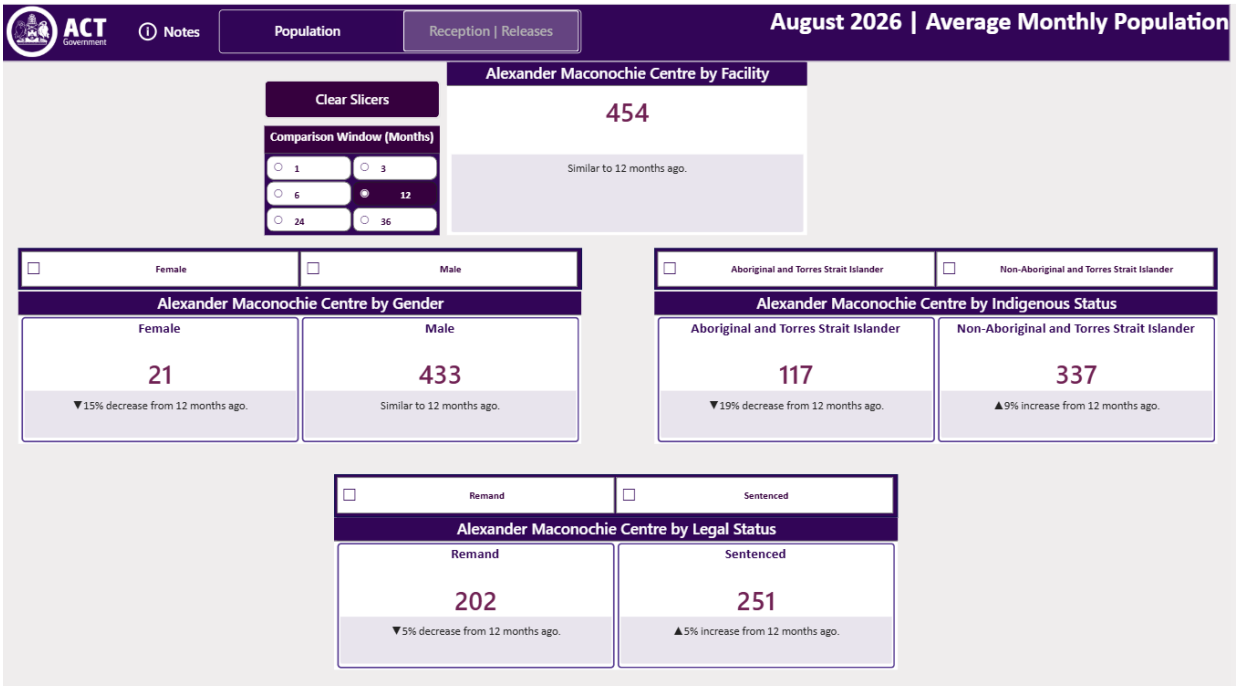
Source: RoGS 2025, (Table CA.5)

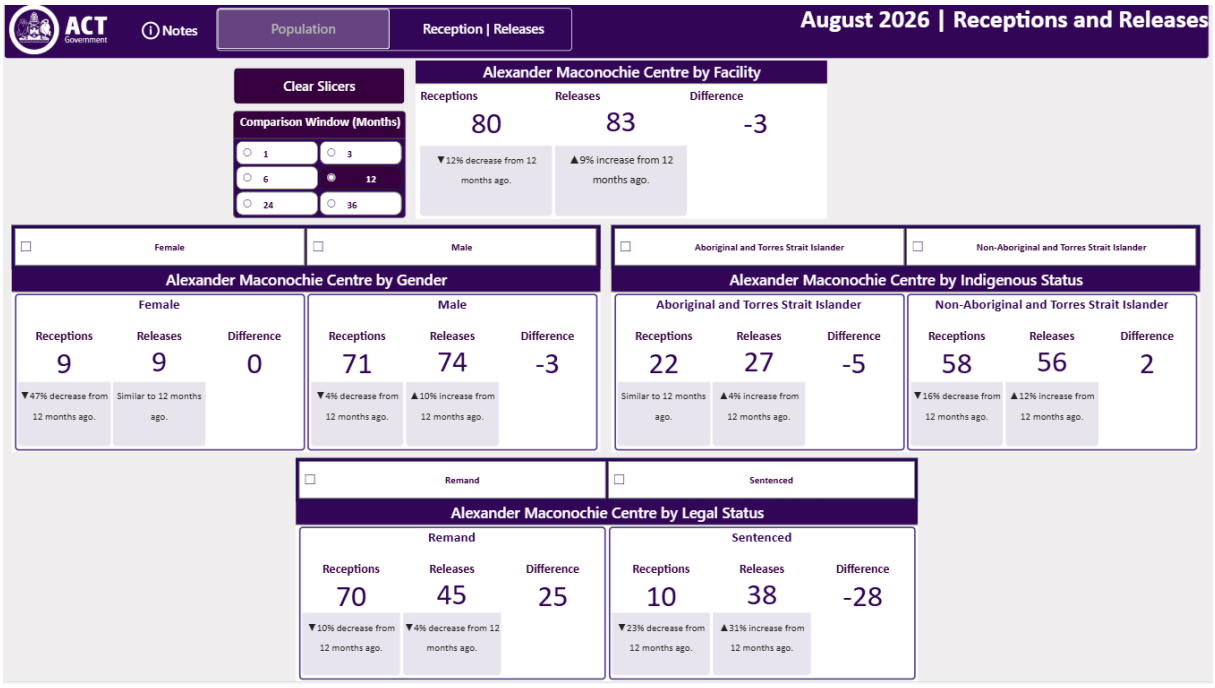
ACT Corrective Services data dashboards

ACT Corrective Services launched its public data dashboard in April 2026. The dashboard makes aggregate, de-identified corrective services data more accessible, supporting informed public discussion and community access to information that has traditionally been difficult to obtain.

The data is updated monthly where available, and highlights provide the average custodial population, reception into custody, releases from custody. The dashboard allows users to compare time periods, filtering or changing by gender, Indigenous status or legal status.

The dashboards can be accessed here https://www.act.gov.au/open/act-corrective-services-data-dashboard





BUILDING THE EVIDENCE BASE

A key achievement has been the significant expansion of the ACT's evidence base on reducing recidivism and contact with the justice system and improving justice outcomes.

The Government has invested in building the evidence base through research and evaluation projects that deliver on commitments made under RR25by25 and the 2024 Election Commitment 159 - *Explore international evidence-based programs that specifically target recidivist offending, with the view to a pilot in the ACT.*

A strong and diverse evidence base is central to the ACT Government's commitment to reducing recidivism and justice reform and the strategic use of both quantitative and qualitative data will continue to inform policy, evaluate outcomes, and guide investment and program design.

The Government's focus in this area is building a multi-dimensional evidence base that combines statistical analysis, lived experience and the sophisticated use of linked data. This integrated approach supports more responsive, effective, and inclusive justice policy and practice.

The table below outlines the research and evaluation projects related to RR25by25 since the first strategy was launched in 2020, including those delivered in this term of Government and outlined in this Report.

2026	**International evidence-based programs that specifically target recidivist offending**
2026	Qualitative research on desistance (POCS)
2026	Data integration report - data linkage by ABS and ANU (Outcome measures project)
2025	Restorative justice conferencing for domestic and family violence and sexual violence: Evaluation of Phase Three of the ACT Restorative Justice Scheme
2025	Resources to design and evaluate criminal justice programs
2025	Co-design of a Justice Futures Fund
2024	Evaluation of the Disability Justice Strategy -First Action Plan
2024	Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site Pilot - Evaluation Report
2024	Cost Benefit Analysis of the Drug and Alcohol Sentencing List
2023	Process Evaluation of the Justice Housing Program
2022	Ngurrambai Bail Support Evaluation
2022	ACT Drug and Alcohol Sentencing List: Process and Outcome Evaluation
2022	Literature Review on Yarning Circles in a Criminal Justice Context
2022	Bail and Parole App Scoping Project: Final Report
2021	Criminal justice mobile applications: A literature and scoping review
2020	Cost Benefit Analysis of Galambany Court
2020	Cost Benefit Analysis of Galambany Court – Summary

To make the evidence base more accessible to the community, a new justice research and evaluation summary webpage has been added to the ACT Government website with links to publicly available ACT based reports

The new page can be accessed through Reducing Recidivism webpage

A summary of the key findings from reports finalised in 2025 and 2026 are outlined below.

Outcome measures project

The intent of the outcome measures project outlined *in RR25by25 and Beyond* was to improve understanding of the impact of RR25by25 through an analysis of linked administrative data from ACT Policing, ACT Courts and Tribunal, and ACT Corrective Services, accessed via the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) DataLab.

Analysis of data from 2015-2024 highlights that reducing reoffending requires early intervention, diversion, equity and stronger data systems. Reoffending is influenced by age of first justice system contact, systemic inequalities, high rates of repeat contact, and limitations in the current evidence base. Reducing criminal justice involvement requires prevention, diversion, culturally responsive approaches, and improved data infrastructure.

Key findings of the final report *Offending in the ACT, 2015-2024: Analysis of administrative data*[10] are outlined below.

Early Contact Increases the Risk of Reoffending

- A clear linear relationship exists between age of first police contact and future re-contact, with 61.9% of young people first contacted at ages 10-12 experiencing further police contact.
- Re-contact rates declined to 52.2% for those first contacted at ages 13-15 and 32.4% for those first contacted at ages 16-17.
- Earlier justice system involvement is associated with increased risk of ongoing system contact.

Over-Representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are over-represented at every stage of the ACT criminal legal system, and the analysis found that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were more likely to have their first police contact as juveniles than non-Indigenous young people (19.1% vs 13.7%).
- The findings reinforce longstanding concerns regarding inequitable justice outcomes.

Very high rates of reoffending

- Reoffending rates were high across all datasets examined, with 34.5% of individuals having subsequent contact with ACT Policing. Of those, 23.9% subsequently appeared before ACT Courts as defendants and 46.9% returned to prison during the observation period.
- Findings suggest many individuals remain caught in cycles of justice system involvement.

Stronger Data Infrastructure is Needed

- Existing ABS holdings provide valuable insights but have important limitations:
    - Datasets cannot currently be linked at the episode level.
    - Key demographic information, including disability status and gender identity, is not consistently available.
    - Information regarding participation in ACT-specific programs is absent.
- These limitations constrain monitoring, evaluation and policy development.

[10] Prepared by POLIS@ANU: The Centre for Social Policy Research, the Australian National University, for the ACT Government; Hayley Boxall, Olivia Halls and Lorana Bartels

Qualitative desistance project

To complement the Outcome Measures Project outlined above, *Pathways Out of the Criminal Justice System* (POCS)[11] presents survey and interview data from people with lived experience of the ACT justice system, to examine the factors that support or hinder desistance from offending. Together, the two reports offer complementary perspectives: where the analysis of administrative data describes patterns and trends at the population level, the POCS report provides depth and texture, through the experiences of individuals navigating pathways out of the system.

This research found that, although pathways into and out of offending were unique, there were common themes, which can inform program design, policy considerations and interpretation of reoffending behaviour and statistics. A summary of the key findings are outlined below.

Foundations for change: The research found that motivation alone is insufficient without structural supports. Stable housing and financial security underpin lasting change, and health, disability and substance abuse needs directly affect a person's capacity to desist.

Relationships matter: Relationships are powerful – however this is not always positive. While supportive relationships promote desistance, high-risk family and peer networks can undermine progress. Children are powerful motivators for change.

Systems enable or derail progress: People often want to change but lack confidence and pathways; service barriers and stigma can contribute to relapse and reoffending, whereas positive interactions with systems increase engagement and trust.

Community & cultural connection sustain change: Cultural identity and Indigenous-led services are critical for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Opportunities to mentor, volunteer and contribute to society reinforce positive identities, and culturally safe long-term support and workforce continuity builds trust.

Sustainable Desistance Requires Coordinated, Relational, Culturally Safe and Long-Term Support Systems: Desistance is strengthened when people have access to stable foundations, supportive relationships, responsive systems, and meaningful cultural and community connections.

Data capacity project

An action under *RR25by25 and Beyond* was to develop a suite of data collection and program evaluation tools to improve program design and evaluation capacity across the ACT Government and non-government sector. Practical resources have been developed for use by front-line justice services funded by ACT Government and have been created to build understanding of evaluation methods and to develop skills in designing program logic statements and data sets. The collection includes resources with supporting templates including guidelines on:

- Creating a program logic
- Seeking consent from clients
- Minimum Dataset – Client
- Minimum Dataset – Activities and Outputs
- Gaining feedback from clients
- Measuring outcomes

These resources [12] are now available on the ACT Government website[13] and also accessible through the Reducing Recidivism webpage.

[11] Pathways Out of the Criminal Justice System, Listening to Lived Experience From the Australian Capital Territory; Hayley Boxall and Lorana Bartels, the Australian National University

[12] Created by The Centre for Social Policy Research (POLIS@ANU): Boxall H, Yates S & Bartels L (2025), Australian National University.

[13] https://www.act.gov.au/open/resources-to-design-and-evaluate-criminal-justice-programs

International evidence-based programs

In 2024 the ACT Government made an election commitment to explore international evidence-based programs that specifically target recidivist offending, with the view to a pilot in the ACT.[14]

JACS has completed a report drawing on international and local research to identify the underlying causes of reoffending and examines strategies that have proven effective in reducing reoffending. Its focus is on successful programs in jurisdictions with comparative criminal justice systems and incarceration objectives to Australia, including Norway, New Zealand, Canada, the United Kingdom, Finland and the United States of America. The key finding is that successful recidivism reduction is less about a specific program and more about embedding six core design principles:

1. Case management and wraparound support.
2. Continuity of care from custody to community.
3. Community and family connection.
4. Cultural safety and community leadership.
5. Gender-responsive and trauma-informed practice.
6. Early intervention, diversion and justice reinvestment.

The ACT is well-positioned to build on existing strengths and respond to community recommendations to support existing programs, through considering how to best embed these principles and expand support for programs that have been designed for the ACT.

INTEGRATING PLANNING, IMPROVING DATA AND LOOKING FORWARD

Integrated planning

The ACT's major reform agendas are increasingly being shaped through co-design and community-led processes and include reduced contact with the justice system as a focus area.

- The *Disability Justice Strategy 2019-2029*[15] was developed with people with disability and includes the goal of reducing justice system contact through system responsiveness and appropriate supports.
- The *Review into the Over-Representation of First Nations People in the ACT Criminal Justice System*[16] identified the need for First Nations-led governance, community authority and whole-of-system reform to address over-representation.
- The *ACT Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2026-2031* has been developed following consultation on how to improve outcomes for young people and reduce reoffending.
- The *ACT Housing Strategy: Implementation Plan Update*[17] includes an action to work across government to improve exit pathways from institutional and supported care settings (such as justice, mental health, health and disability services) by ensuring access to long-term, stable housing with appropriate supports.

The evidence is now clearer that reducing reoffending is not a separate objective from improving outcomes for young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability and others experiencing disadvantage. Rather, reducing justice system contact is a shared outcome of getting broader reforms right.

The Government's commitment to reducing contact with the justice system including reducing recidivism and will continue to be reflected within other justice, community and health strategies focused on improving outcomes for priority populations. This positions those most affected by justice system involvement at the centre of planning and decision making and within services and accountability frameworks most capable of influencing outcomes.

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[14] Government commitment progress reporting for the 11th ACT Legislative Assembly - ACT Government Transparency Portal

[15] https://www.act.gov.au/open/disability-justice-strategy

[16] https://www.act.gov.au/open/review-into-overrepresentation-of-first-nations-people-in-the-act-justice-system

[17] https://www.act.gov.au/open/act-housing-strategy

Data and Reporting

Increasing granularity in data reporting

RR25by25 and Beyond outlined national indicators to measure the health of criminal justice system and context to recidivism measures. National publications provide valuable context for interpreting recidivism indicators, allowing local results to be benchmarked against broader trends and comparable jurisdictions. *Appendix B* provides a summary of key national justice data publications that will continue to be monitored.

The majority of justice data reporting is largely aggregated at population level. While aggregate recidivism rates offer useful headline measures, they can mask significant differences between offence categories and population groups, and national data can be limited in its ability to capture local circumstances, population characteristics, and service delivery contexts that may influence recidivism outcomes within a specific jurisdiction.

Moving forward, improving data capture and reporting across the justice system will be a key area of focus. The aim will be to deliver more timely and granular reporting to provide deeper insight into the drivers of contact with the justice system and where interventions are most effective. Improving data related to those under community corrections supervision and those on bail will continue to be a particular area of focus.

From 2026-27, increased reporting on recidivism indicators will be included in the Justice and Community Safety Annual Reports.

Data linkage

A linked justice data asset would support a more person-centred understanding of interactions across policing, courts and corrective services, rather than examining these systems in isolation. Better integration of justice data has the potential to improve transparency and strengthen the evidence base for reform initiative.

JACS has undertaken significant exploratory work with justice sector partners to assess data linkage opportunities and better understand the technical, governance and operational requirements for a linked justice data asset. Work will continue to explore options for linking data, however considerable investment in resources and expertise would be required to establish and sustain a linked justice data asset.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander justice data focus areas

Priority Action 49 under Phase 3 of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement is to commence development of a strategy to address overrepresentation on remand that includes actions to reduce breaches of bail and increases bail compliance and outcomes. The initial focus is on identifying actions or changes that could support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (adults and youth) on bail to prevent breaches through analysis of remand data for the purpose of identifying underlying causes of proportionally high rates of remand.

Directorates are working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to co-develop a response to the recommendations from the *Review into Overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT Justice System*, which includes several recommendations related to data:

- Strengthen accountability and outcomes measurement (Rec 2.3)
- Establish First Nations-led data governance (Recs 3.11, 3.12)
- Improve data sharing, linkage and quality (Recs 3.10, 7.1)
- Increase transparency and community access to data (Recs 3.13, 3.14, 3.15)
- Improve collection and reporting of justice system data (Recs 7.10, 8.1, 9.1, 11.1, 11.2)
- Use data to drive policy and research (Recs 9.2, 11.1, 11.2)

Justice data has been included in the whole government Indigenous Data Sovereignty audit and JACS will continue to work with central agencies, the Data Reform Group and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body to support implementation of Priority Action 43 Indigenous Data Sovereignty and data management and the supporting arrangements and broader Indigenous Data Sovereignty objectives.

JUSTICE REINVESTMENT: LISTENING, LEARNING AND LOOKING FORWARD

RR25by25 consolidated justice reinvestment as a central strategy for reducing crime, lowering imprisonment rates, and reducing recidivism, acknowledging that offending and recidivism are consequences of broader social, economic and health factors rather than solely as a criminal justice problem.

Traditionally, Justice Reinvestment has involved a redirection of money from prisons to fund and rebuild human resources and physical infrastructure in areas most affected by high levels of incarceration. There is however, no one single definition of justice reinvestment and it has been implemented differently across the world. [18]

In Australia, there are various examples of successful Justice Reinvestment initiatives currently underway across the country and in 2022-23 the Australian Government committed to justice reinvestment as a key method to address the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the justice system through place-based initiatives, led and implemented by First Nations communities and organisations, to help turn the tide on incarceration and deaths in custody.

The Australian Government has established an Interim National Justice Reinvestment Unit to coordinate and support justice reinvestment initiatives at a national level with a procurement process currently underway to select an organisation to deliver the National Justice Reinvestment Unit[19]. A national resource hub has been created by and in partnership with First Nations Australians, sharing their ideas, experiences and expertise in how to design and implement justice reinvestment in their community. The resource hub is available through the Justice Reinvestment Network Australia webpage:
Resources – Justice Reinvestment Network Australia

Recent engagement has shown that community expectations of justice reinvestment in the ACT are evolving. While the ACT's justice reinvestment agenda has traditionally focused on reducing recidivism, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have increasingly emphasised self-determination, community leadership and reducing First Nations over-representation in the justice system.

This shift is reflected in both the *Independent Review into the Over-Representation of First Nations People in the ACT Criminal Justice System*[20] and the 2025 ATSIEB Hearings *Truth Through Transparency: A Turning Point Report*[21], which recommended new approaches to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led justice investment and the Review into Overrepresentation also noted that some community members understood justice reinvestment differently to government. Together with the co-design work undertaken on a Justice Futures Fund under *RR25by25 and Beyond*, these processes have highlighted the importance of developing a shared understanding of what justice reinvestment means in the ACT and how it can best support improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

[18] Source: Australian Law Reform Commission (2019) 'Pathways to Justice—An Inquiry into the Incarceration Rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples', Report 133; Law Council of Australia (2013), 'Value of a justice reinvestment approach to criminal justice in Australia' Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee; Tucker S and Cadora E (2003) 'Ideas for an Open Society: Justice Reinvestment'; Willis M & Kapira M (2018) 'Justice reinvestment in Australia: A review of the literature. Research Report no. 9. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology'; House of Commons Justice Committee (2009) 'Cutting crime: the case for justice reinvestment' First Report of Session 2009-10 Vol 1; Wong K et al (2013) 'The Development and Year One Implementation of the Local Justice Reinvestment Pilot' United Kingdom Ministry of Justice Analytical Series.

[19] Justice Reinvestment | Attorney-General's Department

[20] Refer to Recommendation 3.8 a fund to resource First Nations-led interventions aimed at improving First Nations justice outcomes and addressing over-representation

[21] Refer to Recommendation 46 to launch a Justice Fund, or equivalent, with multi-year funding to support long-term, community-led justice solutions and reinvestments.

Importantly the ACT community views appear to align closely with the five key national Justice Reinvestment principles:

1. Justice Reinvestment aims to reduce contact with the criminal justice system and incarceration of First Nations adults and young people.
2. Justice Reinvestment must be community-led
3. Justice Reinvestment must lead to systemic reform.
4. Justice Reinvestment is place-based.
5. Justice Reinvestment is informed by evidence and data.

Now is the appropriate time for the government to pause, listen and consider how justice reinvestment is defined and implemented in the ACT through the arrangements in place with the ATSIEB to co-develop the response to the recommendations from the Review into Overrepresentation.

The ACT's justice reinvestment journey began with a focus on reducing recidivism. Through listening to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the ACT now has an opportunity to build on that foundation and work towards a shared approach that more closely reflects contemporary national justice reinvestment principles, ACT community aspirations and the goal of reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the justice system.

CONCLUSION

The growing body of research and evaluation and those with lived experience have consistently identified common factors associated with reduced offending and reoffending. These include early intervention, diversion from the justice system, stable housing, strong family and community supports, culturally safe services, continuity of care between custody and community, and long-term, coordinated support. This reinforces that reducing reoffending cannot be achieved by the justice system alone.

The next step is to translate this evidence into practice. This means considering how justice policies, services and investment can work together more effectively, how community and people with lived experience can inform decisions, and how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities can have a stronger role in shaping responses to over-representation. It also means continuing to strengthen data, evaluation and public reporting so that progress can be understood and investment can increasingly be directed toward approaches that demonstrate impact.

The central lesson from this work is clear: reducing reoffending is less about individual programs and more about ensuring people have access to coordinated, culturally safe, community-based supports across crucial touchpoints in their lives that address the factors contributing to justice system involvement.

The legacy of RR25by25 is broader than a single numerical target. It has established a stronger evidence base and a clearer understanding that sustained reductions in reoffending depend on the combined effect of prevention, early intervention, effective justice responses and the social and community supports that help people successfully move away from the justice system. The challenge moving forward is to translate the evidence into action.

APPENDIX A – ACTCS DATA TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

From 2025 onwards, ACTCS processes all recidivism indicator results (in which both the numerator and denominator) from Corrections Records Information System (CORIS) data, which means that comparisons between reporting years should be interpreted with caution.

ACTCS used this opportunity to streamline the data production process and automate the result in the ACTCS Reoffending Data Model.

Revised method

The ACTCS Reoffending Data Model offers a detailed and transparent approach to understanding offender and detainee transfers within and exiting from ACTCS. This method tightly aligns with the RoGS counting rules therefore it is called a 'revised method'.

The model uses legal status to determine if the detainee was on remand or sentenced at the date of discharge. A release or discharge is determined by 'transfer out' date and reason. If there are multiple sentenced discharges for a detainee within the reporting period, then these are counted as multiple episodes and counted for each qualifying transfer.

Where a detainee's legal status was changed to 'sentenced' prior to release, these episodes are captured as sentenced. In quality assurance processes, the Strategy, Data and Research team found that this has captured detainees who were found to have a sentenced court outcome and then released from court. However, ACTCS cannot guarantee that this accounts for all individuals in this situation as it is dependent on operational processes and recording the last known legal status as 'sentenced'.

Discharges where the detainees last known legal status was missing, none or 'remand' are excluded from the RoGS recidivism measure and are out of scope. In addition, if the transfer reason is for interstate transfer, extradition, or due to a deceased detainee then these are excluded as per the RoGS counting rules.

Recidivism (2011–12 to 2023–24)

In previous reporting years, recidivism results were a best endeavours dataset and were calculated manually. Staff would align the data processing rules with the RoGS manual to the best extension possible, however noting the limitations in data collection and management.

The case management system (JOIST) did not have sufficient level of detail to easily and repeatedly determine all the inclusion and exclusion criteria required. For this reason, in some instances, more records were included in the denominator (e.g., prisoners discharged) and fewer records were excluded in the numerator (e.g., prisoners who returned).

In addition, JOIST could not identify the level of detail required to determine transfers between facilities within ACTCS to a sufficient level of detail. On occasions, staff were required to make decisions on inclusion and exclusion criteria on a case-by-case basis which could require an analysis of external documents.

While there are results with a revised data process for 2024-25 compared to historical financial years, there were incomplete or misaligned data migration from JOIST to CORIS which means we cannot realign the methodologies. We recommend reporting previously published results as they were published.

APPENDIX B - POPULATION LEVEL NATIONAL DATA SOURCES

Measures	Relevant Data
Recidivism	Report on Government Services (RoGS) Adults released from prison who returned to prison with a new correctional sanction within two years (Table Ca.4) Adults released from prison who returned to corrective services with a new correctional sanction within two years (Table Ca.4) Adults discharged from community corrections orders who returned to corrective services with a new correctional sanction within two years (Table Ca.5) ABS Recorded Crime – Offenders Number of times proceeded against by police, by gender (Table 16), age (Table 17) and Indigenous status (Table 12) – also used in RoGS ABS Prisoners in Australia Male and female imprisonment rates, age, Indigenous status, % prior imprisonment, % unsentenced, over time (Table 15) Prisoners by Indigenous status, sex and prior imprisonment (Table 29)
Female prison population	ABS Corrective Services, Australia Persons in corrective services, prison and community-based corrections, disaggregated by sex, Indigenous status and legal status (Table 1) Imprisonment rates by sex (Table 5) Persons in full-time custody by sex (Table 4) and type of custody (Table 6) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in full-time custody by sex (Table 11) Persons in community-based corrections, by sex (Tables 15 and 16) ABS Prisoners in Australia Prisoners by sex, Indigenous status, legal status and age (Table 14) Male and female imprisonment rates, age, Indigenous status, % prior imprisonment, % unsentenced, over time (Table 15) Prisoners by Indigenous status, sex and age (Table 21) Prisoners by Indigenous status, sex and prior imprisonment (Table 29) Prisoners by Indigenous status, sex and legal status (Table 30)
Seriousness of offending	ABS Recorded Crime – Offenders Offence type, number and rate per 100,000 (Table 6) Offence type, by Indigenous status, number and rate (Table 22) ABS Criminal Courts, Australia Defendants with a guilty outcome by offence type (Table 8) ABS Prisoners in Australia Prisoners, by Indigenous status and most serious offence (Table 16) Sentenced prisoners, by most serious offence (Table 23) Sentenced prisoners, by most serious offence and sentence length (Table 24) and expected time to serve (Table 25)
Reported crime rates and victimisation	ABS Recorded Crime – Victims Victims, selected offences by State and Territories (Table 9) Victimisation rates, selected offences by States and Territories (Table 10) Victims of family and domestic violence-related offences by sex, States and Territories (Table 30)
Over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	ABS Recorded Crime – Offenders Offence type, by Indigenous status, number and rate (Table 22) Crude and age-standardised Indigenous/non-Indigenous rates and rate of over-representation (Table 23) Offender number and rate, by Indigenous status and gender (Table 24) Number of times proceeded against by police, by Indigenous status (Table 12) ABS Corrective Services, Australia Persons in corrective services, prison and community-based corrections, disaggregated by sex, Indigenous status and legal status (Table 1) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in full time custody, by sex (Table 11) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander imprisonment rates (Table 12) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in full-time custody by legal status (Table 13) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander imprisonment rates, by legal status (Table 14) Persons in community-based corrections by Indigenous status (Table 18) ABS Prisoners in Australia Prisoners by sex, Indigenous status, legal status and age (Table 14) Prisoners, by Indigenous status and most serious offence (Table 16) Imprisonment rate, by Indigenous status (Tables 18 and 20) Prisoners by Indigenous status, sex and age (Table 21) Sentenced prisoners, by Indigenous status and sentence length (Table 26) Expected time to serve by Indigenous status (Table 28) Prisoners by Indigenous status, sex and prior imprisonment (Table 29) Prisoners by Indigenous status, sex and legal status (Table 30) Report on Government Services (RoGS) Criminal lodgements and finalisations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Table 7a.9) Prisoner population, average daily number (Table 8a.4) and by Indigenous status (Table 8a.6) Community corrections offender population (Table 8a.8) and by Indigenous status (Table 8a.9)